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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/076,423	02/19/2002	Keigo Banno	Q68513	9297

7590

06/04/2003

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EXAMINER

KWOK, HELEN C

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2856

DATE MAILED: 06/04/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/076,423

Applicant(s)

Banno et al.

Examiner

H. Kwok

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136 (a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above, claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claims _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of:

1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

*See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

- 14) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).

a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

- 15) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s). 4 6) ☐ Other:

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DETAILED ACTION

Priority

1. Receipt is acknowledged of papers submitted under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d), which papers have been placed of record in the file.

Drawings

2. The drawings are objected. A proposed drawing correction or corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

In Figure 8, the block elements should be labelled with a reference numeral. Also, to add these corresponding reference numerals to its description in the specification for Figure 8.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

4. Claims 2 and 3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

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In claim 2, lines 3-4, the phrase “the reference value measures” is indefinite. There is no reference value being measured. Please clarify.

In claim 3, line 4, the phrase “the integration value” lacks antecedent basis.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

5. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless -

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

6. Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by either U.S. Patent 4,515,021 (Wallace et al.) or JP 9-318644 (Okamura et al.).

With regards to claims 1-3, the references, Wallace et al. and Okamura et al., disclose an ultrasonic wave propagation time comprising an ultrasonic wave transmitted by an ultrasonic element; a reflection wave received as a reception wave by the same or different ultrasonic element; a period of time between transmission of the ultrasonic wave and reception of the reception wave is measured as a propagation time further comprising a reference value setting step comprises subjecting the reception wave to full-wave rectification and integrating the full-wave rectified wave to obtain an integral value and setting a reference value based on the integral value; and a propagation time measurement step comprises determining an arrival time of the

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reception wave by the reference value. (See, Figure 3, column 6, line 41 to column 8, line 63 of Wallace et al.; Figure 5 of Okamura et al.).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. Claims 4-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over either U.S. Patent 4,515,021 (Wallace et al.) or JP 9-318644 (Okamura et al.) in view of U.S. Patent 6,418,782 (Sato et al.).

With regards to claims 4-9, the references, Wallace et al. and Okamura et al., do not disclose utilizing the ultrasonic-wave propagation-time measuring method as a gas concentration sensor within an intake pipe or canister purge line of an internal combustion engine. Sato et al. discloses a gas concentration sensor for measuring concentration within an intake pipe or canister purge line of an internal combustion engine. (See, column 1, lines 5-10). It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to have readily recognize the advantages and desirability of employing the propagation-time measuring method as a gas concentration sensor within an intake pipe or canister purge line of an internal combustion engine

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as suggested by Sato et al. since this is a mere design expedient to an operator in what environment one wants to use this method in without changing the scope of the invention.

Conclusion

9. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

The references cited are related to apparatus for determining the arrival time of ultrasonic signals.

10. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Helen Kwok whose telephone number is (703) 308-8149.


Helen C. Kwok
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hck
May 23, 2003